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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [UN](#) [MO](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: WESTERN SAHARA: ALGERIA POSITIVE BUT GUARDED

Classified By: Ambassador David D. Pearce; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) MFA Director-General for African Affairs Lounes Magramane told the Ambassador on April 25 that Algeria had a very favorable opinion of new UN Special Envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, and that it found the report of his initial impressions "balanced." However, Magramane also pointed out that Algeria had concerns over the continued use of the terms "realistic" and "serious and credible" when referring to a negotiated solution and to the Moroccan proposal. He said that these terms appear to favor one party over another. In addition, Magramane emphasized Algeria's belief that the question of human rights in Western Sahara must be addressed, either by MINURSO or via another channel.

¶2. (C) Magramane asked the Ambassador to come to the MFA on April 25 to convey Algeria's views about the current draft UN Security Council resolution on MINURSO, about UNSCR 1813 of April 2008, and about the relationship of human rights to a technical rollover of the MINURSO mandate. Magramane told the Ambassador clearly that Algeria supports a rollover in order to give Ross some time, but claimed MINURSO was unique in not addressing human rights concerns as part of its mandate. The Ambassador responded by pointing out that a technical rollover was a formality and did not provide an opportunity for revising the overall scope of the mandate.

¶3. (C) Magramane called UNSCR 1813 a "controversial text" that favored the Moroccan side over the Polisario, and regretted that much of its language had been carried over to the current draft resolution. He noted that Ross' initial findings represented a departure from his predecessor Van Walsum, with no preconceptions and biases. Magramane repeated Algeria's concern that language such as "realistic" and "serious and credible" remained, despite what he saw as the more balanced and neutral approach Ross had brought thus far. The Ambassador told Magramane that these views would be shared with the Department and the U.S. Mission in New York. He added that the U.S. had made clear its confidence in Ambassador Ross, but Ross had a tough job, and it was incumbent on all parties now to give him time and space for his work.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Magramane indicated he had been instructed to call the Ambassador in; this was most likely at the instance of Minister-delegate Abdelkader Messahel, the MFA lead on Sahel and African affairs. Our sense is that the GOA wanted mainly to register with us that its non-objection to a technical rollover as a practical expedient should not be taken to imply tacit acceptance of UNSCR 1813 language.
PEARCE